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Boston University

Graduate School

Thesis

THE INFLUENCE OF BIG BUSINESS ON THE WRITINGS OF
UPTON SINCLAIR

BY

Martha Boynton Henderson

(A.B., Duke University, 1936)

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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THE
FABRIC BOOK
AND CONTENT

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PREFACE

From the days of the earliest settlers, the people of the United States have held strongly to the doctrine that the actions of its citizens should be circumscribed by government only in the measure and degree made absolutely necessary by the maintenance of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Under this attitude these people have appropriated and developed nearly half a continent and possessed themselves of immeasurable riches and vast resources. But, during the second half of the last century, this great free wealth became exhausted and life became dependent on the use of property and capital owned by individual members of the nation. So the emphasis passed from acquisition to use, and those who had little or nothing in the way of property became the servants of those who by inheritance or personal energy were in possession of property and capital.

Slowly there arose a consciousness in the minds of the masses of men who lacked property that they had an interest in the use of capital owned by property holders, else the masses would naturally fall to a status of serfs to the proprietors of material wealth. But means to secure this end were lacking, save through one agency, government.

Control of government is not easily had, and is more quickly secured and retained by those who own property,

PREFACE

From the days of the earliest settlers, the people of the United States have held strongly to the doctrine that the actions of its citizens should be circumscribed by government only in the measure and degree made absolutely necessary by the maintenance of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Under this attitude these people have appropriated and developed nearly half a continent and possessed themselves of immeasurable riches and vast resources. But, during the second half of the last century, this great free wealth became exhausted and life became dependent on the use of property and capital owned by individual members of the nation. As the emphasis passed from acquisition to use, and those who had little or nothing in the way of property became the servants of those who by inheritance or personal energy were in possession of property and capital. Slowly there arose a consciousness in the minds of the masses of men who lacked property that they had an interest in the use of capital owned by property holders, also. The masses would naturally fall to a status of servitude to the producers of material wealth. But means to secure this end were lacking, save through one agency, government. Control of government is not easily had, and is more easily secured and retained by those who own property.

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Throughout the ages, thoughtful, kindly, and idealistic individuals have preached panaceas that would, the preachers hoped, ensure to the masses a fair proportion of the material good things of this world, but none have been, even in a small degree, effective.

The possessors of inherited wealth do tend to become slothful and careless and in time lose their goodly inheritance. But the aggressive men who have acquired wealth through their own energy are not easily, and perhaps never, dispossessed of their property. And in the United States most property and capital has been recently secured by its present owners. But the mass of the men and women in America have newly come here or are the children and grandchildren of recent settlers, and the spirit that sent them or their forbears across the Atlantic has not vanished completely.

So, when a clarion call to action comes from an inspiring source, they will respond with an expression of feeling that shakes the self-confidence and security of the rulers of government, property, and business. Such a call came in the early years of the present century, when a group of earnest and devoted men and women delved into the depths of

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our government, social, business, and industrial life and published in hot, eager prose the stories of iniquities they had found.

This thesis will be a short dissertation on the life and work of one member of this group: UPTON SINCLAIR. Mr. Sinclair is predominantly a writer of novels of protest against the evils he has observed during his lifetime, and the emphasis will be placed on those of his books which were written as a reaction against the power and influence which large business and moneyed interests exert upon the lives of working men.

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PART ONE

THE RISE OF BIG BUSINESS FROM 1870 to 1900.

In 1893, the United States was overtaken by a business panic, survived, and about 1896, started on an industrial and financial upswing.

"In the decade which followed the crisis of 1893, a new industrial structure was made out of the chaos of the panic. 'High financing' was undertaken on a scale hitherto unknown. Combinations absorbed their weaker rivals; Standard Oil, especially, gained large interests in New York banks and in the iron mines and transportation lines about the Great Lakes, while it extended its power over new fields of oil in the South-West. In general, a small group of powerful financial interests acquired holdings in other lines of business, and by absorptions and 'community of interest' exerted great influence upon the whole business world. The groups of financiers, headed by J. Pierpont Morgan, came to dominate various Southern lines, and the anthracite coal roads and mines, and extended their influence to the Northern Pacific railway, while a new genius in railway financiering, Edward H. Harriman, began an avowed plan of controlling the entire railway system of the nation. Backed by an important banking syndicate, he rescued the Union Pacific from bankruptcy, and with its profits as a working basis, he

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started to acquire connecting and competing lines." (1)

"Within five years after the crisis of 1893, the gold production of the United States nearly doubled. The United States coined \$224,000,000.--Agriculture, prostrated in the years immediately preceding and following the panic of 1893, turned to the scientific study of its problems, developed dry farming, rotation and variety of crops, introduced forage crops like alfalfa, fed its Indian corn to cattle and hogs, and thus converted it into a profitable and condensed form for shipment. Range cattle were brought to the corn belt and fattened, while packing industries moved closer to these western centres of supply. Dairy farming replaced the unprofitable attempts of older sections of the Middle West and the East to compete with the wheat-fields of the Farther West. Truck and fruit farming increased in the South, and the canning industry added utility to the fruits and vegetables of the West. Following the trend of combination, the farmers formed growers' associations and studied the demand of the market to guide their sales. The mortgaged farms were gradually freed from debt. The wheat crop increased from less than 400,000,000 bushels valued at \$213,000,000 in 1893, to 675,000,000 bushels valued at \$392,000,000 in 1898. Land values and the price of

(1) The Encyclopedia Britannica, New York, 1911, Vol. XXVII p.730.

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"Within five years after the crisis of 1893, the gold production of the United States nearly doubled. The United States coined \$224,000,000--agriculture, protected in the years immediately preceding and following the panic of 1893, turned to the scientific study of its problems, developed its farming, cotton and variety of crops, introduced foreign crops like alfalfa, fed its Indian corn to cattle and pigs, and thus converted it into a profitable and condensed form for shipment. Range cattle were brought to the corn belt and fattened, while packing industries moved closer to these western centers of supply. Heavy farming replaced the unprofitable attempts of older sections of the Middle West and the East to compete with the wheat-belt of the Farther West. Cotton and fruit farming increased in the South, and the spinning industry added activity to the textile and vegetable of the West. Following the trend of concentration, the farmers formed growers' associations and studied the demand of the market to guide their sales. The mortgaged farms were gradually freed from debt. The wheat crop increased from less than 400,000 bushels valued at \$212,000,000 in 1893, to 872,000,000 bushels valued at \$332,000,000 in 1905. Land values and the price of

(1) The Encyclopedia Britannica, New York, 1911, Vol. XXVII, p. 730.

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"By 1900, The United States had a population of 76,000,000; and an aggregate and personal wealth of \$88,500,000;--. In 1901, bank clearings amounted to nearly \$115,000,000,000 against \$45,000,000 in 1894. Exports rose from about \$847,000 in 1893 to \$1,394,000,000 in 1900. The productions of pig iron, which was about 7,000,000 long tons in 1893, was nearly twice that in 1900." (2)

"A 'promotion mania' set in in 1901. The steel industry, after a threatened war between the Standard Oil and Carnegie groups were united by Pierpont Morgan into the United States Steel Corporation with stocks and bonds aggregating \$1,400,000,000. This was only one of the many combinations embracing public utilities of all kinds. Where open consolidation was not effected, secret agreements, as in the case of the meat packers, effectively regulated the market. In the field of railway transportation, Harriman used the bonds of the Union Pacific to acquire the Southern Pacific with the Central Pacific, and by 1906, he was dictator of one-third of the total mileage of the United States. Meanwhile, the Great Northern and Northern Pacific had been brought into friendly working arrangements under James J. Hill, who tried to secure the Burlington railway. A fierce contest followed between the Hill, Morgan, and Harriman forces, resulting in

(1) Ibid. p.729

(2) Ibid. p.730

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compromise by which the Northern Securities Company, a holding company for the joint interest of the contestants, was created. It was admitted by the counsel for this company that the machinery provided in the organization would permit the consolidation of all the railways of the country in the hands of three or four individuals. By using notes of one railway company, based on its interest in others; and by watering the capital stock to recover the cost of the undertaking, while the public paid the added treasury securities, it was possible to acquire a controlling interest in others; and by watering the capital stock to recover the cost of the undertaking, while the public paid the added rates to supply dividends on the watered stock.

" Following a similar tendency, the great Wall Street banking houses were dominated by the large financial groups in the interest of speculative undertakings, the directors of the banks loaning to themselves, as directors of industrial combinations, the funds which flowed into New York from all the banks of the interior. By a similar process, the great insurance and trust companies of New York became feeders to the same operations. Thus, a community of control over the fundamental economic interests of the nation was lodged in a few hands. Rebates and discriminations by the railways gave advantage to the powerful shippers, and worked in the same direction." (1)

(1) Ibid. p.733.

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"In the latter part of the nineteenth century, colossal fortunes were falling into the hands of the fortunate, and those who could not wait for them to fall, were reaching up and grabbing them. Old laws failed to serve new purposes, and most legislators lacked the intelligence, even if they possessed the will, to regulate the dizzy processes of industrial expansion." (2)

"In 1904, the capitalization of four hundred large industrial and transportation combinations amounted to nearly twenty and a half billions. These industrial giants controlled more or less completely many of the commodities requisite in American life. The essential products of iron and steel, meat, petroleum, sugar, copper, flour, ice, anthracite coal, fertilizers, farming tools, locomotives, electrical supplies, rubber goods, leather and glass, were so controlled. The high tariff afforded complete protection to many of these combinations, while railroad rebates gave marked advantage to the steel, meat, coffee, and oil trusts over their smaller and less influential rivals.

"At this time, ninety-five per cent of the railroads of the country were under the control of six groups, dominated by fourteen individuals. In banking circles, two men headed separate groups, the Rockefeller and the Morgan interests,

(2) C.C.Regier, "The Era of the Muckrakers". Chapel Hill, 1932, pp.2 & 3.

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(2) C. V. Bagley, "The Era of the Trusts", Chapel Hill, 1932, pp. 3 & 4.

so that the credit structure of the nation lay in their hands. The combination of formerly competing concerns into one unit and the concentration of control into small groups gave four financial institutions in New York the management of corporations having aggregate resources of \$22,500,000,000. This constituted the greatest consolidation of industrial and financial power ever known." (1)

In the same period of 1893 to 1900, the attitude of the American people was one of complacent pride in this evidence of the greatness of the United States. Each issue of stocks and bonds was immediately absorbed by investors. The organization of another trust was hailed as one more triumph. The few banking houses handling the sale of the securities became household names. Stories of stock watering, of cruelties to small competitors, of the ruination of recalcitrant rivals were all disregarded. Even the violation of existing laws was accepted as a necessity. Money was being made and every shrewd man would try to get his share.

The recklessness of the trust makers knew no bounds. Where grants from public authority were desired, bribery in every form was practiced. Public officials became appendages of financial entrepreneurs, and followed orders as they were issued. This was the day of the robber baron, the lordly captain of industry.

(1) Ibid. pp.4 & 5.

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Here and there a few faint voices questioned the wisdom and the ultimate benefit of this orgy of concentration and consolidation of financial and industrial power. An aristocracy of capitalists was said to be as unwise as one of titled nobles. The misdeeds of these titans were set forth publicly and, with the fickleness characteristic of the mob, were eagerly heard. Perhaps the occasion called for prophets; at any rate they came. And in a manner and by means of a medium wholly unexpected.

The magazines of the country were monthly publications of fiction and routine articles on different phases of national life. Each issue was largely a repetition of the preceding number. In 1900, 1901 and 1902 articles of a newer type began to appear. They dealt with the weaknesses and evils of our economic and social life, and attacked the groups and persons who dominated the current thought and action. The number of these critiques increased and their tone became more vigorous. The lower priced, ten cent, magazines developed an interest in this field and engaged writers to make investigations and write articles on their findings,

The technique of these staff writers was new. Authors openly sought for information from all sources, including the person and groups they were discussing. Every statement was documented and verified from all possible standpoints to eliminate assertions and stories that could not

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be proven. Delving into records became a sport, and nothing was used that could not stand scrutiny in court. The magazines bore the heavy expense incident to such research and paid the writers for their time and not their output.

To this phenomenon Theodore Roosevelt applied the epithet of "muckraking", quoting from Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, the story of the man with the muckrake. (1)

The term was apt but not accurate, as the writers, while delving into the filth and corruption of our governmental and business life were ever thinking of the possible elimination of the nastiness and the prevention of its recurrence.

Articles detailing the shameful corruption of several of our great cities appeared in one or another of the popular magazines and created the journalistic sensation of the day. The circulation of the magazines leaped to high figures. The inquiry spread to state governments and the same conditions of bribery, sale of public resources and franchises to private stock speculating financiers, and disregard of public interests were revealed.

The turn of Big Business came next. Miss Ida C. Tarbell, a historical writer of standing, was the author of several books on historical characters. S.S. McClure, editor and owner of "McClure's", a popular magazine, commissioned Miss Tarbell to write a history of the "Standard Oil Company".

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Five years of investigation were needed to unravel the complicated story of the ramifications of the business of this gigantic concern.

The history was published in installments in the years 1902-1904, and aroused the interest of the people of the United States in this and similar trusts. (1)

Other writers studied these great organizations and published articles and books. Charles Edward Russell wrote a series which he called "The Greatest Trust in the World" and they were published in "Everybody's", another of the low cost magazines. He set forth with much detail and documentation the methods by which the great packers had built up a monopoly in the production and distribution of packing house products. (2)

The railroads were pilloried for their failure to install devices to ensure the safety of workers and passengers; for favoritism in the making of rates; for the granting of rebates to large shippers; for the handling of the private car business, especially in assistance to the beef trust; for the deliberate misleading of the public and the destruction of industries and industrial centers by rate discrimination.

(1) Tarbell, Ida M. History of the Standard Oil Company. McClure, Phillips Co. New York, 1904.

(2) Russell, Charles E. "The Greatest Trust in the World", Everybody's, vol. XII (Feb-Sept. 1905).

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(2) Russell, Charles E. "The Greatest Trust in the World". Everybody's, vol. VII (Feb-Mar, 1903).

City traction companies were subjected to scathing indictment for the securing of franchises by bribery of officials and the maintenance of corrupt and secret control of city governments.

The life insurance business came under suspicion and the activities of a group of writers centered on this great and humanitarian field of effort. Burton J. Hendrick wrote for "McClure's" a series of articles charging that this necessary means of protection for families and individuals had been altered into a gambling device. He showed how a contest for business between the large companies brought about extravagant commissions to agents, reckless advertising, unsound investments and unethical ways of handling the companies' money. (1)

Banking institutions were held up to public obloquy. The methods by which the important New York bankers, institutional and private, gambled with the funds in their hands were exposed by writers who had contact with the actual deals.

The operations of the great industrial combinations were analyzed and the methods of securing railroad rebates, of killing off competition, of defying existing law, of corrupting legislatures and public officers as occasion required, were fully set forth. The American Sugar Refining Company,

[1) Hendrick, Burton J. "The Story of Life Insurance".
McClure's Vol. XXVII (May-Oct. 1906).

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The General Electric Company, the water power groups, The American Cyanide Company, The International Harvester Company, The American Tobacco Company and other trusts all underwent a careful scrutiny and their weaknesses and evils were fully narrated.

The men who headed and controlled these vast aggregations of capital and power were also painted in unpleasant colors. The perversion of the profits of a great enterprise to build up a tremendous fortune for one individual was denounced in the severest terms. No quarter was given; while as citizens and as family men full credit was given to their philanthropy and love of home, as business men they were charged with all the crimes of the code and with wanton defiance of the entire system of morality and fair dealing built over the centuries.

One by one articles came out on the great industrialists and financiers of the time; Andrew Carnegie, Thomas F. Ryan, J. Pierpont Morgan, various members of the Vanderbilt clan, Charles M. Schwab, John D. Rockefeller, the Armour and the Swift families, E. H. Harriman and the Astors. (1)

(1) Lawson, Thomas Frenzied Finance.
Ridgway Thayer Co., New York, 1905.

(1) Russell, Charles E. Lawless Wealth

The Origin of Some Great American Fortunes

B. W. Dodge and Co., New York, 1908.

The General Electric Company, the water power groups, The American Cyanide Company, The International Harvester Company, The American Tobacco Company and other trusts all underwent a careful scrutiny and their weaknesses and evils were fully narrated.

The men who headed and controlled these vast aggregations of capital and power were also painted in unpleasant colors. The perversion of the profits of a great enterprise to build up a tremendous fortune for one individual was denounced in the severest terms. No quarter was given; while as citizens and as family men full credit was given to their philanthropy and love of home, as business men they were charged with all the crimes of the code and with wanton defiance of the entire system of morality and fair dealing built over the centuries. One by one articles came out on the great industrialists and financiers of the time; Andrew Carnegie, Thomas W. Ryan, J. Pierpont Morgan, various members of the Vanderbilt clan, Charles M. Schwab, John D. Rockefeller, the Armour and the Swift families, K. H. Rortman and the others. (1)

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The tariff for the protection of American labor and industry against the low cost, underpaid workers of Europe and Asia was thoroughly attacked. The connection between Big Business and the tariff was fully exposed. Charges of false propaganda in favor of high tariffs were pressed, and claims that high tariffs ensured high wages were denounced.

As an example of the methods and practices of a great and successful combination the powerful Standard Oil Company may be cited. As was common with these great companies, one forceful, domineering individual was the mainspring of the development of the enterprise.

The use of petroleum as an illuminant was discovered in the late fifties and the boom in oil began. The product was abundant, its production and refining inexpensive, and only transportation was costly. A host of men started up in business, each with small capital, and competition had free rein. Costs varied widely and so did prices. The use of pipes to carry oil to railheads, thence to consuming points by rail, accelerated the consumption of petroleum and its products. Refineries were set up near the metropolises of the country.

John D. Rockefeller, at the age of twenty-three years, entered the oil business at Cleveland. In a field of wild, unrestrained competition where to gain and keep business every device, good and evil, legal and criminal, was used without scruple, Mr. Rockefeller was successful. The mental attitude of this man was that his actions were not guided by

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any code of fair-dealing, consideration for others, but that at any and all costs, his objective was to be secured. In his private life Mr. Rockefeller was generous, kindly, and very religious; in his business affairs he excelled Attila the Hun.

Three large railroad companies served the Pennsylvania oil fields. A fierce competition ensued between them, with varying rates and the giving of rebates to favored shippers. Profits were small.

Mr. Rockefeller went to work on this situation. First he induced or coerced a group of large refiners to associate themselves with him under his direction. He then covenanted with the three railroads to give them each an appropriate share of the shipments on the following considerations:

Rates were to be raised ~~or~~ depressed at the request of the combine; they were to get preferential rates or rebates on their own shipments; the combine was to get daily duplicates of the shipments made by competing companies; on all such shipments of competing companies the combine was to receive rebates of the freight rates paid to the extent of fifty per cent on refined oil and twenty-five per cent on crude oil. (1)

(1) Hacker and Kendrick The United States Since 1865.

F.S.Crofts and Co. New York, 1937. (Page 284)

With these irresistible weapons in his hands Mr. Rockefeller forced competitors to sell out to him or to go into bankruptcy. There was no other choice. In the next years he acquired ownership at low prices of ninety per cent of the entire business of refining oil in the United States and several thousand companies and individuals were ruined. (1)

In the seventies he started to obtain ownership of the means of transporting oil from the fields to the refineries at the consuming points. By the use of the same means he took over the pipe lines running to the railheads, forced the railroads to sell out their pipe lines and then built lines directly from the fields to the coast and lake refineries. Early in the eighties, Mr. Rockefeller's medium, the Standard Oil Company, held control over the entire empire of oil in the United States.

Beginning in 1862 with a small capital, this man expanded rapidly and in 1870, organized the Standard Oil Company of Ohio with a capitalization of one million dollars. In 1899, the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, the controlling organization was chartered with a capital of \$110,000,000. During many of these years the profits of the company ran to \$45,000,000 and averaged over fifty per cent of its invested capital and properties and earnings. (2)

He held sway over this great field of enterprise by the same methods that he used to build it up: the Standard Oil

(1) Ibid. p.285

(2) Ibid. p.287

Company still received secret rebates from railroads; it set prices in different parts of the country according to the existence of local competition or its absence, depressing prices to ruin competitors and raising prices to take high profits; it used a system of espionage on the activities of competitors by bribing dishonest officers of other companies and kept in its pay railroad employees; it stopped at no unethical practice. (1)

No advantage came to the public from these methods. The price of petroleum products was kept high, and the margin between cost price and sales price rose steadily. (2)

Mr. Rockefeller and the Standard Oil Company constitute an excellent example of the origin and development of a quasi monopoly. But he and it were not alone. By the use of similar methods, other men and groups secured virtual control over industries and fields of enterprise.

Name all regions of business, finance or industry, and by 1900, a combine had become dominant in each area, headed by some individual of surpassing ability.

Such aggregations of capital and property have two possible uses; to deliver to the consuming public a superior product or service at low cost and moderate profit or to exploit the same public by the sale of an inferior article, under debasing conditions of manufacture and distribution at a high price yielding excessive profits; or more commonly

(1) Ibid. p.286

(2) Ibid. p.287

Company still received secret rebates from railroads; it set prices in different parts of the country according to the existence of local competition or its absence, depressing prices to ruin competitors and raising prices to make high profits; it used a system of espionage on the activities of competitors by bribing disloyal officers of other companies and kept its pay railroad employees; it stopped at no unethical practice. (1)

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Nearly all regions of business, finance or industry, and by 1900, a combine had become dominant in each area, headed by some individual of outstanding ability.

Such aggregations of capital and property have two possible uses: to deliver to the consuming public a superior product or service at low cost with moderate profit or to exploit the mass public by the sale of an inferior article, under deplorable conditions of manufacture and distribution at a high price yielding excessive profits; or more commonly

an adjustment of both phases with a modified result. The "Captains of Industry" chose the second way and sought dominance in their fields for the acquisition of great fortunes.

Upton Sinclair appeared on this scene about 1906. He had written and published five novels without making any impression as a novelist. At the suggestion of a friend, George D. Herron, he spent seven weeks in the stockyards district of Chicago in the fall of 1904. There he talked with workingmen, bosses, superintendents, night-watchmen, saloon-keepers, clergymen, and settlement workers. (1)

In 1905, there began to appear, in a Socialist weekly, the Appeal to Reason, a novel of the Chicago stockyards, by this almost unknown author: The Jungle. (2)

The novel was brought before the general American public in book form in 1906. It was an immediate and enormous success. It became a "best seller" in America, England, and the British colonies. It was translated into seventeen languages, and the world became aware that industrial America, in its toil, its misery, and its hope had found a voice. (3)

The Jungle was the climax of the literary movement in America that concerned itself with the study and exposure of the evils of Big Business. The articles and books aroused the fear and anger of the larger business interests.

(1) Regier, C.C., "The Era of the Muckrakers", Univ. of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C. 1932

(2) Floyd Dell, Upton Sinclair, Doran Co., N.Y. 1927 (3) Ibid pp. 105-106

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(1) Register, C.C., "The Sin of the Stockyards", Univ. of North
Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C. 1934
(2) Upton Sinclair, Doran Co., N.Y. 1927 (81115)
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This young man, Upton Sinclair, by writing a book, had put a great industry on the defensive before the whole public. It was necessary to tighten the grip of business upon the intellectual world. The newspapers were already well in hand; but there was a group of free magazines which were making money out of "muck-raking"-- the very center of the intellectual rebellion. Big Business struck at this group of free magazines, effectively, through the medium of advertising. The magazine policies were changed. Writers were called off from investigations of industrial conditions... The writers for the most part changed with the times, and adapted their views to the new editorial demand; the others were silenced or discouraged. (1)

The stage of Upton Sinclair's literary career, immediately ensuing upon his immense celebrity as the author of The Jungle, falls within this period when the "muck-raking" was being outlawed, and editors and writers taught a lesson by those in control of American business.

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(1) See, e.g., The Era of the Trusts, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1932.

PART TWO

CHAPTER ONE

The Youth of Upton Sinclair

Upton Sinclair was born in Baltimore, Maryland, September 20th, 1878. Both of his parents were of Southern stock and distinguished ancestry. The Civil War reduced the financial circumstances of the paternal line and the father drifted into the field of whisky selling.

His mother's people were of moderate means, and in some branches, wealthy. But Priscilla Harden did not improve her economic status by marriage. Her husband enjoyed the consumption of the goods he sold as much if not more than their merchandising and when he over indulged himself, there was little left of his commissions for his family.

For the first ten years of his life, Sinclair endured an up and down existence, going from one boarding house to another, as his father's income varied. Visits to the homes of his rich relations added to the changes in the pattern of the fabric of his days. These sharp contrasts cut deeply into the feelings of a sensitive child, engendering emotions that carried over into his later life.

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An abhorrence of liquor and a resentment against the excesses in alcohol and wealth were notions that entered. When Sinclair was ten years old, his family removed to New York where the father had got a job of selling hats.

The change in location and work made no change in the father nor in the situation of his family. The same boarding house life continued, and the father changed not his habits.

"Their life was one endless and sordid struggle to make last year's clothing look like new, and to find some boarding-house that was cheaper and yet respectable. There was endless wrangling and strife and worry over money; And every year the task was harder, the standards lower, the case more hopeless!"(1)

A share of the burden of the family life came early to the young lad when the task of seeking for the father from one saloon to another fell to him.

The boy soon began attendance at an East Side New York school, did two grades in one year and at the age of twelve had completed his grammar school course and was ready to enter the next higher school. This was the College of the City of New York. It was called a college, but it was in reality only a high school. (2)

A variety of experiences was packed into the next five years. The school was poorly equipped and staffed by a group of instructors of varying ability. Few of them helped him to get more than the routine of the curriculum. Reading brought

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(2) Upton Sinclair, "American Outpost," (p.29)
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His fifteenth year was marked by an extraordinary action. He had been doing some writing, odds of verses and jokes, and selling the trifles. His earnings were as much as four to five dollars a week. Altho still attending the "City College", he persuaded his parents to allow him to live in a room of his own, a top-floor bedroom, costing \$1.25 a week. The remainder of his income must suffice for food and all other expenses. (1)

From his fifteenth to his sixteenth year, he followed this mode of living. He read and wrote, altho there was little relation between the two. His secret wish was to become a poet and he was certain that he could plan his life so that this desire could be realized. At times his emotional states would rise to raptures when he felt he saw visions that called him to the circle of the masters of poetry. (2)

Along side of these dreams, he lived a practical life imposed by necessity. His knack of writing turned to the production of tales for boys and adventure, together with variations of stock jokes. Each week he wrote a number of one serial for the Army weekly and another for the Navy (3)

(1) Floyd Dell, Upton Sinclair, George H. Doran, N.Y. 1927. p.41.

(2) Ibid. pp.42-43.

(3) Ibid. pp.46-47.

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(1) Lloyd Bell, Upson Hindsdale, George H. Doran, N.Y. 1937, p. 41.
(2) Ibid. pp. 42-43.
(3) Ibid. pp. 44-47.

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So he continued into his twentieth year, writing more than two million words a year, and ^{at times} earning \$70 a week.

He completed his courses at the "city college" when eighteen years old, and entered Columbia University as a graduate student in law. Meanwhile, the thought of his desire to be a poet lay ever in his mind. The fire in his heart burned always. The interplay of these forces of thought, hope, desire, emotion, and action developed a unique attitude and a peculiar nature.

His objective was a poetic career, a necessity for the welfare of humanity. The present means was his occupation as a hack writer. The pretense of studying law he soon gave over. His real life was spent in the company of the poets of the past in preparation for his own divinely inspired work, while his outside occupation kept him in the land of the living.

The time came when he felt **prepared** for his first great effort. With one hundred dollara, he travelled to Quebec and immured himself in the woods. But not for long. His mother followed him and with her a woman friend and the friend's daughter. Then followed one of the unusual courtships told of writers. Resolved not to yield to any woman, he preached to this one until he lost himself in his own

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efforts at protection, and in the fall of the same year, 1900, he married the friend's daughter.

Back in New York, he began the effort to combine the work necessary for his own and his wife's support with the necessary outlet for his poetic emotions. He turned to the writing of novels. The first was done while in Quebec in 1900, and was published in 1901 as Springtime and Harvest. The second novel, Prince Hagen, appeared in 1903, and then came in the same year, The Journal of Arthur Stirling, written in 1902.

The book is a diary of a young poet, who, after a bitter and in the end unsuccessful struggle, yields to suicide. The author pours forth all the fears, joys, emotions that governed him for the years before 1902.

The Civil War then appeared in his mind as a location for a novel, and into Manassas he poured the thoughts and feelings of a youth of Southern origin who enlists on the Union side and fights through to the field of Manassas. Sinclair's own early feelings about Southern ways and thought are expressed in this book.

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Sinclair wrote simply, telling a tale gleaned by seven weeks of residence in Packingtown. In the picture, two colors are used; black for the packers, white for the workers. But no more gripping tale of terror, brutality, outrage, and debasement has been written in America. All the evils of corporation operation of industry are packed in one book, and the indictment is scathing.

The success of the book may be called enormous. A "best seller" throughout the English speaking world, the book was translated into many languages , and has had a steady sale since. Beyond this literary achievement, the book set the people of the United States off on a crusade against diseased meat. Indeed, the reason for the writing of the book, the exposure of the effect of the packing industry on its workers made little impression on the public, but the thought of having eaten food prepared in the manner described in the novel revolted them. And revolt they did and forced through the Congress a Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906.

"So Sinclair reached the gateway of his career. Not as a poet of idealism and fantasy but as an equally inspired novelist of protest. The way ahead was clear, a road to be followed to the end. (1)

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The plan was for a large group to live together, dividing the work between themselves so that each would have one job to do which he would perform for himself and all the others. The hope was that the wearisome cares of day by day living would be magically done and the dwellers in Helicon freed for the doing of the joyful pleasures of the mind and spirit.(2)

Some fifty to sixty people, including ten children joined. The colonists purchased nine and one half acres of land near the Palisades on the Hudson River, within an hour's journey of New York. There was a large three story building, formerly a boys' school, with pipe organ, swimming pool, a bowling alley, a theater, a billiard room, thirty-five bedrooms, a children's dormitory, dining room and play room and accessories. Lodging cost \$3.00 a week; meals \$5.00 a week, and the children were taken care of at a cost of \$4.00 a week. (3)

This eminently conservative and, within its own limitations, entirely successful economic and social experiment came abruptly to an end after six months. One night in

(1) Floyd Dell, Upton Sinclair, George H. Doran & Co. N.Y. 1927, p.121

(2) Ibid. pp.121-122

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(2) Ibid., pp. 122-123
(3) Ibid., pp. 123-124

March, 1907, a fire burned Helicon Hall to the ground, destroying the entire contents of the house; the Colony was wiped out. (1)

Upton Sinclair had been, for a young author, rich, and thus he had spent and lost his riches. He commenced a wandering life, spending the summer of 1907 in New Jersey, the winter in Bermuda, the next summer in the Adirondacks, meanwhile writing The Metropolis and The Moneychangers. During the winter of 1908-09, in California, he organized a travelling theatrical company, producing Socialist plays and he put on three of his own dramas. He then migrated to the single-tax colony at Arden, Delaware, where he stayed for three years. (2)

While here, he was arrested on the charge of "gaming" on the Sabbath, in that he played tennis. Ten others of the colony were arraigned on the same charge, they having played baseball. All were convicted and fined, but refused to pay their fines. So they went to jail for eighteen hours. The story got the front page of all the newspapers and when they narrated the conditions of filth, vermin, and bad food they had endured, the publication of their story forced some improvement in the jail. (3)

(1) Ibid. p.124

(2) Ibid. p.125

(3) Ibid. p.126

March, 1907, a fire burned within Hall to the ground, destroying
the entire contents of the house; the police are doing
their best to recover the property.

Urban Sinclair had been, for a long season, Vice, and
told us his story and I put the matter in a somewhat
different light, according to the facts of 1907 in New Jersey.
The matter in Berlin, the next winter in the following
month, the winter of 1907-08, in October, he organized a
travelling theatrical company, producing musical plays
and he put on a lot of his own dramas. He then came to
the single-tax colony at New York, where he stayed
for three years.

While here, he was arrested on the charge of "loitering"
on the harbor, in East River, and taken to the
colony were assigned on the 2nd of May, they having been
released. All were released and I was not allowed to pay
their fines. So they went to the Atlantic coast. The
story goes that, for all the suffering and work they
experienced the conditions in New York, Vermont, was not good any
and, indeed, the conditions of their new home were in-
ferior to the old.

(1) 1910, 2.12
(2) 1911, 2.12
(3) 1912, 2.12

The publication of Samuel the Seeker in 1910, and of The Fasting Cure, in 1911, added little to his fame. But in the latter part of 1911 appeared Love's Pilgrimage, the story of his life to 1904, especially of his marriage. Its candor is magnificent, shameless, beautiful. It succeeds as realism. (1)

His marriage ended soon afterwards. His wife ran off with a lover; Sinclair tried for a divorce in New York, was denied his petition, and went to Holland where he obtained his divorce quietly. (2)

While in Holland and in England, he wrote Sylvia, published in 1913, and its sequel, Sylvia's Marriage, in 1914. The story deals with a young Southern girl who first resisted and then succumbed to the wooing of a young millionaire and bore him a blind baby, the consequence of her husband's premarital wild oats. On leaving him and returning to her parents she intervenes in the love affairs of others and battles with the ordinary reticences of her world. The theme is handled well. (3)

In 1913, he returned to the United States, and married Mary Craig Kimbrough. At this time, a coal strike was going on in Colorado, and Sinclair was drawn to investigate the situation. The episode was dramatic: eleven thousand miners, with their wives and children, on strike and evicted from

(1) Ibid. pp.128-129

(2) Ibid. pp.130-131. (3) Ibid. pp.133-135

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company-owned houses, were living in tent colonies that had been raided and shot up by gunmen- and finally machine guns had been turned on them, their tent colony at Ludlow had been burned, and three women and fourteen children had been suffocated to death. Yet this news had not been published in the newspapers, with rare and meagre exceptions.

Sinclair resolved to break this conspiracy of silence. Being convinced that John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was personally responsible for the tactics of the mine-owners, he went to Mr. Rockefeller's office in New York to tell the story. An interview was denied. Sinclair had a group of people picket 26 Broadway, the Rockefeller offices, with bands of crepe on their arms. They were arrested, and Sinclair gave the reporters the story of Ludlow and the strike. His narrative was published in the papers on the front page, and the conspiracy of silence was broken. Sinclair returned to Colorado, and completed his inquiries on the coal strike. This knowledge he embodied in the novel, King Coal, published in 1917. (1)

The novel is brilliant in its descriptions of coal mining, its dangers, hardships, and evil management, but it does not rank as one of Sinclair's best efforts.

In 1915, Sinclair moved to Pasadena, California, where he has since resided. The Great War was in progress and

(1) Ibid. pp.136-140.

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In principle, all Socialists were strongly anti-militaristic, and the party voted to support this attitude. But Sinclair thought differently, and espoused the cause of the Allies. (1)

In 1918, Sinclair published Jimmie Higgins. The title is a nickname given the rank and file of the Socialist party, and tells of the hero's struggles to make up his mind on the subject of enlistment and of his service and triumphs in Europe. But Jimmie is sent to Siberia, and is sadly disillusioned by his service there as to the altruistic attitude of the United States. (2) This novel is powerful in its contrasts.

100%: The Story of a Patriot followed in 1920. It tells of a labor spy and depicts him as an incredibly base tool of wretched evil doers. (3)

In The Book of Life, published in 1921 and 1922, Sinclair pours forth his ideas, hopes and prophecies on Mind and Body, on Society, and on Love and Life. The book has little value, save as a revelation of the thoughts and attitudes of the author. Lacking a scientific basis, they contribute little to help and guide others. (4)

Four books written by Sinclair are in a group having one

(1) Ibid. pp.143-146

(2) Ibid. pp.146-149

(3) Ibid. pp.149-150

(4) Ibid. pp.151-158

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- (1) 1917. pp. 123-128
- (2) 1918. pp. 128-129
- (3) 1919. pp. 129-130
- (4) 1921. pp. 131-132

central theme: the exposition of American life as the author has observed and fought it in his own life. These books are: The Profits of Religion, published in 1918;

The Brass Check; A Study of American Journalism,
published in 1919;

The Goose-Step: A Study of American Education, published in 1923, and its companion volume, The Goslings : A Study of American Schools, published in 1924;

Mammonart: An Essay in Economic Interpretation, published in 1925.

These works deal with religion and the church, with the press, with colleges, schools, educators, and students, and with the efforts of writers to depict and explain modern economic, industrial and business processes. (1)

The canvas is enormous, and the painting varies in power. Sinclair offers the criticism of a revolutionary on the achievements of the American nation. He finds nothing to his liking, and sees in all things the prostitution of a magnificent undertaking to serve the orgies and sins of a small group of exploiters.

After two years of labor, Sinclair published Oil ! in 1927. In this work, he returns to the novel as a medium of expression, and astonishingly, achieves as high a level as he reached in The Jungle and Love's Pilgrimage.

(1) Ibid. pp.159-177.

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The theme is unchanged: the exploitation and debasement of workers by the masters. The field is extensive, and while based on the drilling and production of petroleum, extends to New York, Washington, and Europe, and dwells at length on Hollywood. The characters are solidly depicted and plausible, and even though the incidents of the story are incredible, the narration is more convincing. It is a mature work, written with a firm and competent hand, and with the assurance of a master craftsman. Possibly this work will endure.

An energetic, vigorous personality, Upton Sinclair has carried on several incidental activities. Some years ago, he began to publish his own books, and has acquired the copyrights to all, save three or four. The volume of his business is large, even though the profits are small. He has written many plays and produced a few; none are of importance. (1)

Throughout his career he has been a Socialist, and closely identified with the Socialist Party. He was a Socialist candidate for Congress twice, for the Senate, once, and for the Governor of California in 1926. His interest and activity on behalf of social revolutionary movements is unabated; his health is good, and the future may bring forth greater literary works.

(1) Ibid. pp.179-187.

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PART TWO

CHAPTER TWO

An Analysis of the Works of

Upton Sinclair

THE JUNGLE

The Jungle, published in 1906, is the story of a Lithuanian peasant family which came to America with ardent hope and met exploitation and degradation at the hands of a system based nakedly on human selfishness. It is a shockingly realistic picture of the sordid bloodiness, the sorrowful filth, the torturing toil that ground down the hapless serfs of the overlords.

The workers in Packingtown were slaves to a system which bled from them every spark of energy and capitalized on their labor by robbing them of wages:

"After all the hard work a man did, he was paid for only part of it. Jurges had once been among those who scoffed at the idea of these huge concerns cheating; and so now he could appreciate the bitter irony of the fact that it was precisely their size which enabled them to do it with impunity. One of the rules on the killing-beds was that a man who was one minute late was docked an hour; and this was economical, for he was made to work the balance of

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The workers in Packingtown were slaves to a system which plied them every spark of energy and capitalized on their labor by robbing them of wages:

"After all the hard work a man did, he was paid for only part of it. There had once been among those who scattered at the idea of these huge concrete cheating; and so now he could appreciate the bitter irony of the fact that it was precisely their lack which enabled them to do it with impunity. One of the rules on the killing-bed was that a man who was one minute late was docked an hour; and this was economical, for he was made to work the balance of

the hour-- he was not allowed to stand around and wait. And on the other hand, if he came ahead of time, he got no pay for that--though often the bosses would start up the gang ten or fifteen minutes before the whistle. And this same custom they carried over to the end of the day; they did not pay for any fraction of an hour--for "broken time." A man might work full fifty minutes, but if there was no work to fill out the hour, there was no pay for him. Thus, the end of every day there was a sort of lottery-- a struggle, all but breaking into open war between the bosses and the men, the former trying to rush a job through, and the latter trying to stretch it out. Jurgens blamed the bosses for this, though if the truth be told, it was not always their fault; for the packers kept them frightened for their lives." (1)

There is a scathing attack on the hazards and disease to which the workers were subjected.

Let a man so much as scrape a finger, pushing a truck in the pickle-rooms, and he might have a sore that would put him out of the world; all the joints of his fingers might be eaten by the acid, one by one.

Of all those who used knives there was scarcely a person who had the use of his thumb; the base of it had been slashed till it was a mere lump of flesh against which

(1) The Jungle, Upton Sinclair, Vanguard Press, N.Y. 1929. p.90.

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(1) The Jungle, Upton Sinclair, Vanguard Press, N.Y. 1920. p. 90.

the man pressed the knife to hold it. They would have no nails- they had worn them off pulling hides; their knuckles were swollen so that their fingers spread out like a fan.

Men worked in cooking rooms where the germs of tuberculosis might live for two years, but the supply was renewed every hour.

The time limit that a man could work in a chilling room was said to be five years. The hands of the wool pluckers went to pieces even sooner than those of the pickle-men. The pelts of the sheep were painted with acid to loosen the wool, and then the pluckers had to pull out this wool with their bare hands, till the acid had eaten their fingers off. Those who worked at the stamping machines often could not keep the pace set and had parts of hands chopped off. The odor of a fertilizer-man would scare any ordinary visitor at a hundred yards.

"As for the other men, who worked in tank-rooms full of steam, and in some of which there were open vats near the level of the floor, their peculiar trouble was that they fell into the vats; and when they were fished out, there was never enough of them left to be worth exhibiting; sometimes, they would be overlooked for days, till all but the bones of them had gone out to the world as Durham's Pure

Leaf Lard !" (1)

(1) Ibid. p.102

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Lead Lead !"
(1) Told. p. 102

The workers of Packingtown, because of their ignorance and inexperience, were easy victims to the scheming scavengers who infested the location and preyed upon the poor baffled souls. Their struggle against all the overpowering forces of capital, politics, graft, and all the unhappy conditions which develop in a society ruled by greed and a code that every man lives for himself and must fight against all comers, were pitiful and utterly vain.

Mr. Sinclair hoped, through The Jungle, to appeal to the heart of the people:

"Here in this city tonight, ten thousand women are shut up in foul pens and driven by hunger to sell their bodies to live...Tonight in Chicago, there are ten thousand men, homeless and wretched, willing to work and begging for a chance, yet starving, and fronting in terror the awful winter cold ! Tonight in Chicago there are a hundred thousand children wearing out their strength and blasting their lives in the effort to earn their bread !.... There are a hundred thousand people cast off and helpless, waiting for death to take them from their torments !.... And then turn over the page with me, and gaze upon the other side of the picture. There, a thousand- ten thousand maybe- who are the masters of these slaves, who own their toil. They do nothing to earn what they receive, they do not even have to

84.

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ask for it-it comes to them of itself, their only care is to dispose of it....Their life is a contest among themselves for supremacy in ostentation and recklessness, in the destroying of useful and necessary things, in the wasting of the labor and the lives of their fellow-creatures, the toil and anguish of the nations, the sweat and tears and blood of the human race ! Automatically and inevitably, all the wealth of society comes to them. The farmer tills the soil, the miner digs in the earth, the weaver tends the loom, the mason carves the stone, the clever man directs, the wise man studies, the inspired man sings, and all the result, the products of the labor of brain and muscle, are gathered into one stupendous stream and poured into their laps. The whole of society is in their grip, the whole labor of the world lies at their mercy--and like fierce wolves they rend and destroy; like ravening vultures they devour and tear ! The whole power of mankind belongs to them, forever and beyond recall--do what it can, strive as it will, humanity lives for them and dies for them ! They own not merely the labor of society, they have bought the government; and everywhere they use their raped and stolen power to entrench themselves in their privileges, to dig wider and deeper the channels through which the river of profits flows to them ! " (1)

(1) Ibid. pp.297-298.

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(1) Ibid. pp. 237-238.

Mr. Sinclair cries that the capitalists do nothing to earn what they receive, it comes to them of itself. His criterion of labor is that it must be manual or physical.. He might as well say that the President of the United States does no work. The huge business concerns which he attacks are the results of days and nights, and months and years of tremendous mental stress and endeavor.

In his documentation of the Beef Packing industry, he carefully selects all the sordid spots and presents them as the only aspects of a workingman's life. He finds no weaknesses in the men themselves; he ignores any human failings which they may have. However, in the capitalists, he finds nothing to commend; they are inhuman fiends who constantly plan hideous tortures for those less fortunate than themselves.

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THE METROPOLIS

The Metropolis, published in 1910, is less a story than a series of scenes. It is a study of that luxurious society which developed with the sudden and enormous increase of concentrated wealth. Mr. Sinclair reveals it as something unreal, almost uncouth; gorgeous in outward appearance, whimsical and wanton in display, unprecedented in extravagance of every conceivable form. With this grotesque luxury he portrays a social temperament just as fantastic, almost barbaric.

The desire of the idle to do the unexpected in order to create an explosive effect is illustrated by a "topsy-turvy" lunch, called by one young man a "digestion exercise!"

"It began with ice-cream, moulded in fancy shapes and then buried in white of egg and baked brown. Then there was turtle soup, thick and green and greasy; and then, horror of horrors-- a great steaming plum-pudding. It was served in a strange phenomenon of a platter, with six long, silver legs..then appeared cold asparagus, served in individual silver holders resembling andirons. Then- appetite now being sufficiently whetted- there came quail, in piping hot little casseroles; and then half a grape-fruit set in a block of ice and filled with wine; and then little squab ducklings, bursting fat, and an

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The desire of the idle to do the unexpected in order to create an explosive effect is illustrated by a "Joggy-turvy" lunch, called by one young man a "digestion exercise." "It began with ice-cream, moulded in fancy shapes and then buried in white of egg and baked brown. Then there was turtle soup, thick and green and greasy; and then, horror of horrors--a great steaming plum-pudding. It was served in a strange phenomenon of a platter, with six long, silver legs..then appeared cold asparagus, served in individual silver holders resembling sandtrons. Then--appetite now being sufficiently whetted--there came quail, in piping hot little casseroles; and then half a grape-fruit set in a block of ice and filled with wine; and then little squid doorknobs, purring fat, and an

artichoke; and then a café parfait; and then--as if to crown the audacity-- huge thick slices of roast beef !" (1)

Mr. Sinclair gives detailed descriptions of the fantastic palaces the idlers lived in.

"It was a tremendous building, a couple of hundred feet long. One entered into a main hall, perhaps fifty feet wide, with a great fireplace and staircase of marble and bronze, and furniture of gilded wood and crimson velvet, and a huge painting, covering three of the walls, representing the Conquest of Peru. Each of the rooms was furnished in the style of a different period-- one Louis Quatorze, one Louis Quinze, one Marie Antoinette, and so on. There was a drawing-room and a regal music-room; a dining-room in the Georgian style; and a billiard-room also in the English fashion, with high wainscoting and open beams in the ceiling; and a library, and a morning-room and a conservatory. Upstairs in the main suite of rooms was a royal bedstead, which alone was rumored to have cost twenty-five thousand dollars; and you might have some idea of the magnificence of things when you learned that underneath the gilding of the furniture was the rare and precious Circassian walnut.

"But what brought the guests to Castle Havens was the casino. It was really a private athletic club- with

(1) The Metropolis, Upton Sinclair. Pasadena, Calif. 1923.
p.45

tanbark hippodrome, having a ring the size of that in Madison Square Garden, and a skylight roof, and thirty or forty arc-lights for night events. There were bowling alleys, billiard and lounging rooms, hand-ball, tennis and racket courts, a completely equipped gymnasium, a shooting-gallery, and a swimming-pool with Turkish and Russian baths. In this casino alone there were rooms for forty guests."

"Such was Castle Havens; it had cost three or four millions of dollars, and within the twelve-foot wall which surrounded its grounds lived two world-weary people who dreaded nothing so much as to be alone. There were always guests, and on special occasions, there might be three or four score. They went whirling about the country in their autos; they rode and drove; they played games, outdoor and indoor; or gambled, or lounged and chatted, or wandered about at their own sweet will. Coming to one of these places was not different from staying at a great hotel, save that the company was selected, and instead of paying a bill, you gave twenty or thirty dollars to the servants when you left.

"It was a great palace of pleasure, in which beautiful and graceful men and women played together in all sorts of beautiful and graceful ways. In the evenings, great logs blazed in the fireplace in the hall, and there might be

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"It was a great palace of pleasure, in which beautiful and graceful men and women played together in all sorts of beautiful and graceful ways. In the evenings, great legs played in the fireplace in the hall, and there might be

an informal dance-- there was always music at hand. Now and then, there would be a stately ball, with rich gowns and flashing jewels, and the grounds ablaze with lights, and a full orchestra, and special trains from the city. Or a whole theatrical company would be brought down to give an entertainment in the theatre; or a musical show, or a troupe of acrobats, or a menagerie of trained animals. Or perhaps there would be a great pianist, or a palmist, or a trance medium. Anyone at all would be welcome who could bring a new thrill-- it mattered nothing at all, though the price might be several hundred dollars a minute." (1)

Men who controlled as much as four or five hundred millions of trust funds are described as men of fashion with all the exaggerated and farcical mannerisms of the dandy of the comic papers.

"He wore a conspicuous and foppish costume, and posed with a little cane; he cultivated a waving pompadour, and his silky mustache and beard were carefully trimmed to points and kept sharp by his active fingers. His conversation was full of French phrases and French opinions; he had been reared abroad, and had a whole-souled contempt for all things American--even dictating his business letters in French, and leaving it for his stenographer to translate them. His shirts were embroidered with violets and perfumed with violets--and there were bunches of violets at his horses' heads, so that he might get the odour as he drove ! " (2)

(1) The Metropolis, Upton Sinclair, pp.94-96.

(2) Ibid. p.102.

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The desire to find new ways to spend money seemed to lead members of this group far beyond the realm of reason, as is revealed in the attitude of many women in Society towards cats and dogs.

"Some of these animals had elaborate costumes, rivalling in expensiveness those of their step-mothers. They wore tiny boots, which cost eight dollars a pair- house boots and street boots lacing up to the knees; they had house-coats, walking-coats, dusters, sweaters, coats lined with ermine, and automobile coats with head and chest-protectors and hoods and goggles- and each coat fitted with a pocket for its tiny handkerchief of fine linen or lace ! And they had collars set with rubies and pearls and diamonds- one had a collar that cost ten thousand dollars ! Sometimes, there would be a coat to match every gown of the owner. There were dog nurseries and resting-rooms, in which they might be left temporarily; and manicure parlours for cats, with a physician in charge. When these pets died, there was an expensive cemetery in Brooklyn especially for their interment; and they would be duly embalmed and buried in a plush-lined casket, and would have costly marble monuments." (1)

Mr. Sinclair delves into some of the methods used by Big Business, and reveals the ruthlessness with which the administrators attain desired ends.

"What's a patent to lawyers of concerns of that size ? They'd have taken it and had it in use from Maine to Texas, and when he sued, they'd have tied the case up in so many technicalities and quibbles that he couldn't have got to the end of it in ten years- and he'd have been ruined ten times over in the process." (2)

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(2) Ibid. p.203.

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(1) The Magdalen, Upton Sinclair, pp. 188-189.
(2) Ibid. p. 202.

Mr. Sinclair deplores the effect which the lack of responsibility of this class is producing.

"In the beginning, people had simply done as they pleased spontaneously, and without thinking about it; but now the custom had spread to such an extent that it was developing a philosophy. There was springing up a new cult, whose devotees were planning to make over the world upon the plan of doing as one pleased. Because its members were wealthy, and able to command the talent of the world, the cult was developing an art, with a highly perfected technique, and a literature which was subtle, exquisite and alluring. Europe had such a literature for a century, and England for a generation or two. And now America was having it, too ! " (1)

The novel is an exposé of the idleness and wastefulness, the drunkenness and debauchery, the meanness and the snobbishness of New York "Society".

Mr. Sinclair's attitude and his purpose in writing The Metropolis may be summed up as follows:

"It was a city ruled by mighty forces--money-forces; great families and fortunes, which had held their sway for generations, and regarded the place, with all its swarming millions as their birthright. They possessed it utterly--they held it in the hollow of their hands. Railroads and telegraphs and telephones-- banks and insurance and trust companies-- all these they owned; and the political machines and the legislatures; the courts and the newspapers, the churches and the colleges. And their rule was for plunder; all the streams of profit ran into their coffers. The stranger who came to their city succeeded as he helped them in their purposes, and failed if they could not use him. A great editor or bishop was a man who taught their doctrines; a great statesman was a man who made the laws for them; a great lawyer was one who helped them to outwit the public. Any man who dared to oppose them, they would cast out and trample on, they would slander and ridicule and ruin." (2)

(1) Ibid. p.283

(2) Ibid. p.295

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(1) 1913, p. 233
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THE COAL

In this novel, Sinclair turns from the laboring class to the leisured class in showing the effects of Big Business. He treats here no specific industry, but rather shows the results of tremendous wealth upon the persons who have it to use. This is a striking example of exaggeration through selective documentation. He chose the most neurotic characters for his examples, persons who, in any walk of life would be obviously maladjusted. All that he says may be true, but what of the sane, normal souls who happened to be born into wealthy families and yet still had the more admirable human characteristics ?

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KING COAL

King Coal is represented by Mr. Sinclair to be a correct account of the conditions under which the mine workers of Colorado work, live and have their being.

The story, written in 1917, is divided into four sections and the titles given to these divisions are illustrative.

Book One.....The Domain of King Coal.

Book Two.....The Serfs of King Coal.

Book Three.....The Henchmen of King Coal.

Book Four.....The Will of King Coal.

Book One, The Domain of King Coal, is a simple, unadorned and restrained narrative of the methods of employment, of work underground, of housing and boarding arrangements, of company provision of the simple needs of living, of supervision and control by foremen and superintendents and of the operation of State laws relating to coal mines and mining.

In employment of workers a careful selective process is used by which any person suspected of a labor union membership or connections is refused work and driven from the companies' camps; is charged employment fees by persons having friendly relations with foremen and by the foremen themselves. In securing change of jobs bribes are exacted by foremen from workmen without compunction as to the capacity of the em-

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ployees to pay the sums required.

Work underground is described as naturally dangerous and as being carried on without any concern for the observance of the simplest precautions for the safety of the workers and with complete disregard of the laws of the State bearing on accident prevention. These laws are used as a cloak to enable the management to avoid using any of the methods that experience and study had developed to permit coal mines to be safely operated. The text of the laws was published to show what was required of the owners and every enacted obligation was completely disregarded.

Housing was represented to be of the crudest nature, wholly unsuited to furnish the simplest form of comfort and sanitation, while the provisions for boarding and lodging unmarried or unattached men were set out as being below those found in any city ten-cent flop house.

Company stores are the sole means of purchasing the necessary supplies for housekeeping, of clothing, and the simple accessories of living. The prices are cited as being extortionately high and the goods as being paid for in company scrip, discounted ten per cent, although payment of wages in such scrip is prohibited by law.

As told in this book the supervision by company officials is based on revolting brutality. The foremen and superintendents have become so debased by their own actions as to be unfit for human association. This tyranny so affected the

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Of all the horrifying conditions narrated, the worst are these attitudes between foremen and workers by which the autocratic control of the official deprives the worker of every right of citizenship and renders him an abject creature of fear.

The story is lightened by clever characterization in which simple human sentiments of family affection, of friendship, of generosity and kindness are attributed to the workers. None of these notions appear to be held by any of the company officers.

As told by Mr. Sinclair, the exercise of supervisory authority by an employer immediately becomes an instrument of horrible tyranny, revolting to the mind of any free man and reduces to the lowest levels of degradation both the supervisor and his employees.

The hardships, cruelties and living and working conditions are all difficult to believe, but are so simply and convincingly told as to carry a sense of reality.

Book Two- The Serfs of King Coal runs largely to the tale of a firmly enforced control of all public expression of opinion unfavorable to the mine owners from the workers and all other persons living in the mine zones.

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The story outlines the means by which the managements held closely within their own hands all elections and appointments of public officials, forcing the workers to vote as the management wished, adding and removing names from the voting lists as suited their purposes and stuffing ballot boxes and altering votes, sheets, and records to their own advantage.

All public officials were employees or dependents of the mine-owning groups and enforced or disregarded the laws on orders of their employers and superiors. Here the story carries numerous incidents showing the extreme cruelties of these minions and the savage way in which they mis-treated all persons opposing their will.

Apart from the elements of fact, the book tells a story of the efforts of the miners to establish a check weigher of coal mined by the workers to stop the cheating of the mine owners by recording short weights. The narrative is vivid, and devoted largely to a contest between the chief personage of the story and the "camp marshal", a mine officer. The hero suffers numerous indignities and outrages at his opponent's hands, when the battle is suddenly ended by a mine explosion. Then the author extends himself in a brilliant account of the scenes around the pit head of a mine.

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In Book Three- The Henchmen of King Coal--the story of the mine disaster is carried on effectively to a point where revelation is made that the managers deliberately plan to seal the mine and so smother the fire in due time, instead of installing a fan that would draw out dangerous fumes and make possible an effort to save some one hundred men.

One is asked to believe that in the year of our Lord 1918, a mine manager would sacrifice the lives of one hundred men, most of them personally known to him, to save several thousand dollars worth of coal, timber, and supplies.

Yet Mr. Sinclair insists that every incident incorporated in his novels is well documented.

The novel then narrates extensively the efforts of the hero in canvassing one public official after another, going one step higher in each move, soliciting action to compel the mine manager to open the mine head. And each appeal is denied, because the defendant would be the mine operator.

This situation is more plausible, having in mind the difficulties in securing legal action against possible wrong-doers who are protected by wealth, power and position in places remote from Colorado.

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railroad difficulty near the site of the story. So, a weak melodramatic interlude drops the novel to a lower level and brings in incident and characterization that help nothing in carrying along the quick stream of the story. The son, "convinced against his will", is persuaded to order the opening of the mine, rescue work begins, and while some miners are found dead, others are brought up to the ground alive.

During this part of the novel, the hero, hitherto presented as a miner, but not of worker's origin, is revealed as a mine-owner's son, one of the group of the oppressors. Again, this development weakens the power of the novel. The tale runs to a feeble ending with the short-time labor leader returning to his old haunts, leaving the men and the women he had started on the way to a strike in a much worse position than that in which he had found them.

King Coal is pitched at a high screech, accompanied by much beating of drums and clashing of cymbals. The noise is really tremendous. Workers are doubtless enthralled; others are appalled, unless they are unbelievers. King Coal is an appeal for help, cloaked as a novel. Help for men and women who are depicted as living at the lowest level on which life can be sustained. The solution offered is the upbuilding of and strengthening of labor unions, definitely the United Mine Workers of America. Perhaps this suggestion may not appeal as a solution to some readers.

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THE BRASS CHECK.

The Brass Check, written in 1919, is Mr. Sinclair's attack upon American Journalism. He indicts the press with the charge that if any man in America has put himself on record as an opponent of Big Business, an accuser of the dominant interests, he may look for no mercy from the newspapers; he is on the black list, and every effort will be made to destroy him. He claims that the press has an incurable habit of perverting the words and actions of speakers and public men; it systematically misrepresents them by false reporting or downright invention, and is ready to print any kind of stuff likely to discredit a reputation. Again, he comes to his thesis: that the press are almost completely dominated by the great financial and industrial interests, which, in the cities of the entire American continent, own the papers, own their owners, or exert over the news columns a despotic power by virtue of advertisement patronage.

In no other country has the press developed so satanic an ingenuity of perversion, so extraordinary a facility in presenting a man as a fool or an undesirable, in making him imply or say what never entered his mind. The evil is not to be explained in any simple fashion, but there are two contributory reasons which may be described as constant.

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The first is that American reporters and interviewers do not use shorthand. The country which has produced the most efficient class of commercial stenographers in the world accepts the view that stenography is a drawback to the recording of public speech, and tolerates the practise of leaving the reporter's own language put within inverted commas as a verbatim transcript of what was said. The second reason is that a straight report of a meeting or an interview is not news in the American newspaper world; it is not a story.

Mr. Sinclair charges the leading press association as being in league with Big Business to suppress or pervert the news, especially against the world of organized labor. He has mercilessly brought together instances of what is despicable, vicious, and inimical to the public welfare in his arraignment of the press.

To intensify his arguments, he speaks in the voice of John Swinton, editor of the "New York Tribune", answering, at a banquet of his fellow editors, the toast: "An Independent Press" :

"There is no such thing in America as an independent press, unless it is in the country towns.

"You know it and I know it. There is not one of you who dares to write his honest opinions, and if you did, you know beforehand that it would never appear in print.

(1) The Brass Check, Upton Sinclair, New York, 1919, p. 400.

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"I am paid one hundred and fifty dollars a week for keeping my honest opinions out of the paper I am connected with-- others of you are paid similar salaries for similar things- and any of you who would be so foolish as to write his honest opinions would be out on the streets looking for another job.

"The business of the New York journalist is to destroy the truth, to lie outright, to pervert, to vilify, to fawn at the feet of Mammon, and to sell his race and his country for his daily bread.

"You know this and I know it, and what folly is this to be toasting an "Independent Press."

"We are the tools and vassals of rich men behind the scenes. We are the jumping jacks; they pull the strings and we dance. Our talents, our possibilities, and our lives are all the property of other men. We are intellectual prostitutes." (1)

In his concluding chapters, he presents the remedy, outlines the necessary steps, and visualizes the results. He proposes the establishment of a national publication controlled by its subscribers and directed by journalists of known integrity and independence. Conservatives and liberals and representatives of national organizations such as: the Federation of Women's Clubs, the Federation

(1) The Brass Check, Upton Sinclair, Pasadena, 1919. p.400.

"I am paid one hundred and fifty dollars a week for

keeping my honest opinions out of the paper I am connected with--others of you are paid similar salaries for similar things--and any of you who would be so foolish as to write his honest opinions would be out on the streets looking for another job.

"The business of the New York Journalist is to destroy the truth, to lie outright, to pervert, to vilify, to fawn at the feet of Mammon, and to sell his race and his country for his daily bread.

"You know this and I know it, and what folly is this

to be boasting on "Independent Press."

"We are the coolies and vassals of rich men behind the

scenes. We are the jumping jacks; they pull the strings

and we dance. Our talents, our possibilities, and our

lives are all the property of other men. We are intellect-

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(1) The Press Check, Upton Sinclair, 1912, p. 400.

of Protestant Churches, the Federation of Catholic Societies, the National Teachers' Federation, and the American Federation of Labor shall be included in the board of directors. This publication shall carry no advertisements and no editorials; it shall be a record of events and an organ for the dissemination of the truth.

Here, again, Mr. Sinclair has chosen examples which will best prove his case. He is as keen as any lawyer in selecting the evidence which will help to win his argument. The harshness of his judgment and the narrowness of his vision are sharply disclosed in this novel. The very nature of the work of publishing a newspaper subjects owners, editors, and managers to every variety of pressure and hauling and pulling, powerful and slight. Selection of material for publication is done under circumstances of difficulty. Judgment is exercised quickly and without much weighing of all the factors. Some charity in making an appraisal seems reasonable. But Sinclair does not think so. The premise that every action and opinion by newspaper owners and writers is taken under dread of reprisal by some wealthy and extensive advertiser controls Sinclair's mind and determines his opinions. This attitude arouses a thought that the selfishness, lack of consideration, and ruthlessness that he attributes to all capitalists may be present, to some degree, in his own mind.

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BOSTON

The novel, Boston, is a reflection of Upton Sinclair's active participation in the struggle of the wage workers for social and economic justice. Based on the Sacco-Vanzetti case, and published in 1928, the story grew out of an intense human drama, chosen because it demonstrated certain general conditions. Many of the characters are based on life, and some carry their actual names. The account of the proceedings is based on written records and personal interviews.

Cornelia Thornwell represents the aristocracy's revolt against itself and in favor of the proletariat. The fictional plot is an account of her attempt to withdraw from the physical and mental sloth of her group and identify herself with those who, she feels, live closer to realities. She is a tool used to contrast the manners, interests and ideals of rich and poor.

The capitalists of Massachusetts are portrayed through her eyes to be parasites who preyed upon the laborers:

"Landlords and loan sharks, peddlers of shoddy goods, smooth-tongued agents inducing them to put their savings into non-existent gold mines and oil wells--there were few among these workers who managed to escape such plunderers." (1)

Vanzetti acts as thoughtful spokesman for the workers:

(1) BOSTON, vol.1. Upton Sinclair. A.&C.Boni,N.Y.1928.(p.57)

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(1) BOSTON, vol. I, Upton Sinclair, A. L. Bond, N. Y. 1938, (p. 87)

"What is trouble with people is not badda heart, it is badda teach; badda sistema-it is power, it is government... It is priesta, king, capitalista, padrone-taka men, maka fight, maka war for profit." (2)

Mr. Sinclair uses the case as an illustration of the clash between two factions:

"There was a propertied class, and there was a laboring class, and between them was a war!

"And now a battle under way and the lines drawn, and deserters hated and punished, if necessary, killed! The immense, rich, eager, nervous, implacable young Empire was smashing a revolt of its slaves, crucifying its resisting gladiator by the roadside for a warning to all the rest!... The Sacco-Vanzetti case was no longer the casual venality of a few local politicians, no longer the accidental malice of one elderly legal despot; the Sacco-Vanzetti case was capitalist government, the same in America as everywhere else in the world- the will of a predatory class!" (1)

(2) BOSTON, Vol.1. Upton Sinclair, A.C.Boni, N.Y., 1928. (p53)

(1) BOSTON. Vol.2. Upton Sinclair, A.C.Boni, N.Y., 1928. (p658)

"What is trouble with people is not bad heart, it is
 bad system; bad system it is power, it is government... It
 is crime, king, capitalist, patronage men, make right,
 make war for profit." (2)

Mr. Sinclair uses the case as an illustration of the
 clash between two factions:
 "There was a property class, and there was a laboring
 class, and between them was a war!"

"And now a battle under way and the lines drawn, and
 desperate hatred and punished, if necessary, killed! The
 immense, rich, eager, nervous, implacable young Empire was
 smothering a revolt of its slaves, crushing its resistance
 flustered by the revolution for a warning to all the world....
 The Emancipation case was no longer the casual venality of
 a few local politicians, no longer the accidental malice of
 one elderly legal leech; the Emancipation case was
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 in the world - the will of a predatory class!" (1)

(1) BOSTON, Vol. 2, Urban Sinclair, A.C. Hunt, N.Y., 1933, (1933)
 (2) BOSTON, Vol. 1, Urban Sinclair, A.C. Hunt, N.Y., 1933, (1933)

This book is another expression of Mr. Sinclair's conviction that capitalism is ruthless, brutal, without morals, and even willing to commit murder to secure its own ends.

His characters are shaped to serve his own ends. They are not truly human. Vanzetti is portrayed as a suffering angel, endowed with the wisdom of the ages, not as an uneducated Italian, a laborer accused of murder. He is pictured as having the qualities of a legendary martyr.

Sinclair's attacks on the prominent figures of Boston and Massachusetts are blindly prejudiced. He invariably questions the morals of any man who does not see eye to eye with him.

In this book he makes one statement which shows glaringly the weakness in his logic. "You can make a chauffeur of a governor but you can't make a governor out of a chauffeur!" --this from a man who is the champion of the working-classes!

This book is another expression of Mr. Simola's conviction that capitalism is rotten, twisted, without morals, and even willing to commit murder to secure its own ends. His characters are shaped to serve his own ends. They are not truly human. Vanzetti is portrayed as a suffering angel, endowed with the wisdom of the ages, not as an uneducated Italian, a laborer accused of murder. He is pictured as having the qualities of a legendary martyr.

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MONEY WRITES.

"All my childhood and youth I heard a formula:
'Money Talks !'" I never had any money, so to me the
formula meant : 'Shut up !'"

"Now the world has moved on, and talking is out of
date. It is by means of the printed word that the modern
world is controlled. So the formula must be altered:

"Money Writes !"

"This book is a study of American literature from the
economic point of view. Published in 1927, it takes our
living writers, and turns their pockets inside out, asking:
"Where did you get it ?" and "What did you do for it ?" It
is not a polite book, but it is an honest book, and it is
needed."

This is the preface to Money Writes ! The book reveals
Sinclair's conviction that it is the money of the publishers
or the money behind the publishers that determines what an au-
thor shall write.

"What is the most important single fact about American
Civilization ? The answer is : Economic inequality. There
has been inequality in other times and places; the poor
have been equally poor, but never in history have the rich
been so rich, or so secure in their riches, never have they
built so elaborate a machine for flaunting their riches

JOHN WILSON

"All my childhood and youth I heard a formula:
'Money talks!' I never had any money, so so the
formula meant: 'I am poor!'"

"Now the world has moved on, and talking is out of
date. It is of course the printed word that the modern
world is controlled. So the formula must be altered:
'Money writes!'"

"This book is a study of American literature from the
economic point of view. Published in 1907, it was one
living witness, and some of its points inside and outside:
'Where did you get it?' and 'What did you do for it?' It
is not a political book, but it is an honest book, and it is
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"This is the problem to money talks! The book reveals
Chesterton's conviction that it is the money of the world that
or the money behind the machine that determines what is
that it writes."

"That is the great economic miracle that about America
distinction? The answer is: American inequality. There
has been inequality in other times and places; the fact
of no man really poor, but never in history have the rich
been so rich, or so secure in their riches, never have there
been so electronic machines for dominating their riches."

before the eyes of the poor. In this statement we put our finger upon the solar plexus of America: the land of a million rich engaged in devising new ways of exhibiting wealth; and of a hundred and twenty million poor, engaged in marveling at the achievements of the wealth exhibitors.

"There have been great empires prior to capitalistic America: the number of them is buried under the sands of the ages. But we may safely make this assertion, that never in all history, or pre-history, has there been an empire in which the victims of exploitation were kept so continuously face to face with the evidences of their loss. Now, as ever, the poor are huddled in slums, far from the palaces of the rich; but now, for the first time, the rich have been vain enough- to devise 'Sunday Supplements', 'Tabloids', and 'home editions' to enable the poor to share imaginatively in the lives of the rich." (1)

The explanation as to why this condition does not lead to revolution lies in the fact that youth has been taught in grammar school, in high school, in church, in the newspapers, the movies and the political campaigns that America is the land of opportunity, and every child born in it has a chance to become president. There is a conviction,

(1) Money Writes--Upton Sinclair, Albert and Charles Boni, New York, 1927. p.11.

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(1) Money Writer--Upton Sinclair, Albert and Charles Bond,
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deeply rooted in the hearts of ninety-nine out of every hundred persons that he or she is destined to rise above the other ninety-nine and have a chance to live in luxury. It is the ethical code of a civilization, the propaganda whereby ten million youths are kept contented with their lot.

"All the way up and down the social scale... you find.. the impulse to move in the direction of gold. The reporters who write up the sensational event, in a language which departs ever farther from English-- each one is hoping to attract the attention of the "desk", and to rise upon the wings of this story to the permanence of "feature writing". The "desk" is hoping, by masterful handling of each new opportunity, to replace the managing editor in the affections of the publisher. The managing editor is hoping to avoid being replaced by a dozen too eager subordinates. The publisher is hoping to prove to some big banker that a newspaper is capable of affording its "eighty per cent and safety", just the same as if it were chain grocery stores, or the diversion of industrial alcohol. From top to bottom, the same "crysotrophism", the deadly pressure of competitive greed." (1)

(1) Ibid. p. 16.

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Our leading young writers live in a world from which truth-telling and heroism have been banished by official decree. It is the great Fascist magazines and publishing houses with their direct Wall Street control, which determine American literature and art; it is theirs to say who shall be great, famous, rich; and any young writer who defies them has his complete freedom to retire into a garret and starve.

We think of America as a place of freedom and growth, and it is true in the superficial things of life. But, when it comes to the fundamental things, the inner spirit that really makes life and art, America has become another "House of the Dead", where all things are fixed, and the Constitution and the Bible take the place of the Tsar's excrements as objects of worship. The Constitution becomes the "greatest document that ever emanated from the brain of man", and our capitalist press has devised a tropism whereby several millions of school children make speeches in praise of it. The Bible is the inspired word of God, and any teacher of biology who subtracts a jot from it is arrested and fined, or mercifully turned out to starve.

"And what is the purpose of this new idolatry? Simply that the money-masters may keep the power to give orders and be obeyed. Constitution-worship means that a group of elderly corporation lawyers, known as a Supreme Court, have

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power to make the law of the land anything the corporation want it to be; the existing law they interpret to suit the money-masters, and when the people protest and pass new laws, they call the laws "unconstitutional" and the people believe it. Behind this regime of the dead hand, works the living fist of Big Business, collecting from a pious and diligent working-class the heaviest tribute that has ever been taken in any part of the earth at any period of history. This fist is armored with the clubs of policemen and the rifles of militia, with the latest devices in armored cars and machine guns and poison gas bombs. Behind the fundamentalist cassock you find the strangling power of ostracism, plus the blacksnake whip and the lynching noose. "

"Such is Fascist America; and these masked forces confront the young writer, and say to him, with the utmost politeness and amiability, write what we want written, and we will heap upon you all the honors your talents deserve. The young writer, being for the most part guileless, and utterly untaught in public affairs, believes the great statesman, and the great judges and the great editors and the great preachers of his country. He lets them take him into war to validate the loans of J.P. Morgan and Company."(1)

(1) Ibid. pp.32-33.

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The fundamental fact to bear in mind concerning capitalist culture is that it maintains a large class of people in luxurious idleness; the cream of labor's product is skimmed off and fed to this class, which renders no service whatever. It is not merely the number of these people, but the fact that they represent the goal of aspiration for the rest, and so, what they do and say and think becomes the standard. Capitalist art is an art for parasites, and exists by glorifying and defending parasitism; it mirrors the worthless elements in society and serves to increase the vices upon which it feeds.

Mr. Sinclair says that, "Capitalistic art, when produced by artists of sincerity and intelligence, is pessimistic, because capitalism is dying; it has no morals, and can have none, being the negation of morality in social affairs. Proletarian art is optimistic, because it is only by hope that workers can act, or dream of acting. Proletarian art has a morality of brotherhood and service, because it is only by these qualities that the masses can achieve their freedom."

"And in order to avoid cheap sneers and misunderstandings, let me add that there is a capitalist art of false optimism, based upon the master-class desire to keep the workers in ignorance as to their conditions and prospects. To unmask this art is the first task of the social rebel,

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and I have tried to do my share of this service." (1)

It is Mr. Sinclair's thesis that the masters of this country are drunk with greed, and willing to subject their wage-slaves to any degradation whatever, as a means of perpetuating the master's power. They may succeed; but only at the cost of destroying society. Capitalism carries within itself the seeds of its own death; it can produce wealth, but it cannot distribute it, and the future of our world is like its past, a series of crises, with glutted markets and unemployment. The destiny of the workers under capitalism is to breed new generations to fight new wars, to win new opportunities of profit for their masters.

He challenges young writers to examine our society and inquire what force in it has power, or is capable of developing power, to replace capitalism. He finds only one possible answer: the organized workers whom capitalism has herded into large-scale industry. To hold this belief does not mean to idealize our present labor unions, which are a product of the competitive system, and tarred with its brush. But, one may make, concerning the working masses two assertions: first, they constitute the principal element in our society which lives by production, rather than by the manipulation of prices; second, they can prevail by solidarity, and in no other way. So, in the course of

(1) Ibid. p. 177.

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their struggle for power they are evolving a new and higher ideal, and constitute the germ of the new society, based upon brotherhood and co-operation.

He set out to prove in Money Writes ! that fundamentally, the ideals of revolutionary labor are identical with those of the vital creative artist.

Simclair moved to California to Pasadena, in 1916 and was living close to the California oilfields during the period of their development. Since the conditions that riveted his attention in other locations were reproduced in California he devoted his time to the study of oil operations. From this effort came Gill.

The same theme and plan is used in Gill as in earlier novels. The background is a great natural resource, oil, located under areas of land without the knowledge of the landowners. The existence of oil is discovered and wild scenes follow as ownership is sold, exchanged and acquired. Vividly the operations of oil drilling, well production, tank erection and oil storing are depicted and the book is worth the reading for the description alone. The portrayal is clear, precise, sharp, and projects into the reader's mind enduring images of

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OIL ! A NOVEL.

Oil ! was written in the two years before 1927, and was published in that year. King Coal had been written and published in 1917, an interval of almost ten years. Meanwhile, Sinclair had turned to pamphleteering and had been using a different vehicle to express himself. There might be reason to doubt whether he could go back to novel writing with any degree of success. But Oil ! is the equal of any of his works and in several ways has been carried to a high level.

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an important phase of our economic development. Sinclair shows the skill of a master in scenic drawing.

The story goes on into a narration of the efforts of strong, capable, unscrupulous men to buy small holdings and consolidate them into larger units and to continue the process until the entire oilfield is held by five or six companies and a few independent operators.

In the process of amalgamation the oil men use all legal and every illegitimate means of securing success. The devices and tools of development are mostly violations of any moral code and are applicable to any field of endeavor. The tale includes a long story of the Teapot Dome scandal and of the scheme by which certain officers of Standard Oil Company of Indiana robbed their own company and others and, on discovery, fled to Europe and stayed there. The names are changed.

Highlights in the story are scenes of oilfield fires, strikes with evictions, assault and murder by public officers, tales of the extravagances of moving picture actors, actresses and company officials with intimate stories of their vices.

Characterization is weak. Sinclair's personages are saints and devils, angels and fiends; few are flesh and blood human beings. Characters in fiction must be created, not described. Sinclair is a reporter and in this field is a master; but he lacks the imaginative power to breathe into a figure the breath of life. None of his characters will ever be remembered apart from the story. All are puppets; none live.

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In the process of amalgamation the oil man uses all legal and every illegitimate means of securing success. The devices and tools of development are mostly violations of any moral code and are applicable to any field of endeavor. The tale includes a long story of the Teapot Dome scandal and of the scheme by which certain officers of Standard Oil Company of Indiana robbed their own company and others and, on discovery, fled to Europe and stayed there. The names are changed.

Highlights in the story are scenes of oilfield fires, strikes with evictions, assault and murder by public officers, tales of the extravagances of moving picture actors, actresses and company officials with intimate stories of their vices.

Characterization is weak. Sinclair's personages are paints and jewels, angels and devils; few are flesh and blood human beings. Characters in fiction must be created, not described. Sinclair is a reporter and in this field is a master; but he lacks the imaginative power to breathe into a figure the breath of life. None of his characters will ever be remembered apart from the story. All are puppets; none live.

Oil! is perhaps the most mature of Sinclair's works in that the unevenness of earlier novels is leveled off and the variations in strength are less marked. The same power and weakness are there but the weakness is less noticeable. The man is young; possibly in another effort he may achieve greater heights.

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PART TWO

CHAPTER THREE

Critical Comment by His Contemporaries.

The reaction to Mr. Sinclair's writing is varied in its approbation, but never seems to be passive or unopinionated. Some find his work highly commendable, others consider its effect deplorable, but none seem to doubt his sincerity. This quality, above all others, is unquestionable.

Robert Cantwell

Mr. Cantwell praises Sinclair for his honesty in exposing the exploitation of laborers by capitalistic enterprises. He is sympathetic toward the reformer's attitude, and does not find him prejudiced.

"plunging headlong into the teeming subrural atmosphere of American business and politics, with their every-day frame-ups and routine treacheries that, in business and political circles, are as completely taken for granted as the custom of shaking hands." (1)

"Sinclair's moral strength has never let him escape an awareness of the degradation and humiliation that are the normal lot of the oppressed in our republic, and his honesty has never let him remain silent about them." (2)

"His imagination is filled with the intrigues and the manoeuvres and hypocracies of capitalists." (3)

After the Genteel Tradition

American Writers since 1910

Edited by Malcolm Crowley

W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., N.Y. 1937

(1) Ibid. p.39 (2) Ibid. p. 45 (3) Ibid. p.48

PART IV

CHAPTER THREE

Official Government of the
United States

The Commission to the President's Commission is...

...the Commission, but never seems to be given...

...the Commission, but never seems to be given...

...the Commission, but never seems to be given...

...the Commission, but never seems to be given...

...the Commission, but never seems to be given...

Section 1001

...the Commission, but never seems to be given...

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Robert Cantwell

"He is the first important American novelist to see in the struggle between capital and labor the driving force of modern industry; he has hammered away for a lifetime at the cruelties and injustices of exploitation as well as at the grossness and insensitivity of life among the exploiters, and his books, with all their unevenness and vacillation, have a simple literary honesty about them that makes the work of most of his contemporaries seem evasive and affected." (1)

"In his concern with the moral aspects of exploitation, his strong religious feeling, his indifference to Marxian theory, his reformism, and his hope for a peaceful solution of the class struggle, he has been the outstanding literary representative of the Second International, in the way that a writer of the type of André Malraux- intense, defiant, scornful- promises now to become the voice in fiction of the hard-pressed and violent life of the Third ." (2)

(1) Ibid. p.50

(2) Ibid. p. 50.

"He is the first important American novelist to see in the struggle between capital and labor the driving force of modern industry; he has hunted away for a lifetime at the gruel and injustice of exploitation as well as at the grossness and insensitivity of life among the exploited, and his books, with all their unevenness and vagueness, have a single literary honesty about them that makes the work of most of his contemporaries seem evasive and affected."

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(1) 1946, p. 80

(2) 1946, p. 80.

Van Wyck Brooks

Van Wyck Brooks sees in Sinclair a one-sided sympathy for the proletariat. He feels that the glorification of the workingman is not a healthful attitude in that it arouses destructive emotions which cannot be helpful in the solution of the social problem.

"It is natural that Mr. Sinclair should be popular with the dispossessed; they who are so seldom flattered, find in his pages a land of milk and honey. Here all the workers wear haloes of pure golden sunlight and all the capitalists have horns and tails. " (1)

"But Mr. Sinclair, naturally enough, has seen what he wants to see and has studied what he wanted to study; and his special simplification of the social scene is one that inevitably makes glad the heart of the victim of our systems. It fills the victim with emotion, the emotion of hatred and the emotion of self-pity." (2)

"These false simplifications, these appeals to the martyr in human nature are so much dust thrown in the eyes of the proletariat." (3)

Emerson and Others

Van Wyck Brooks

E.P.Dutton & Co. N.Y. 1927

(1) Ibid. p.212

(2) Ibid. pp.212-213

(3),Ibid. p. 215

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- (1) Ibid. p. 212
- (2) Ibid. pp. 212-213
- (3) Ibid. p. 212

David Karsner

Mr. Karsner attacks Sinclair on the ground that he is overly prejudiced in favor of Socialism, and is unwilling to view the social situation from any angle other than his own distorted one. He calls him to task for misrepresentation, to European readers, of American ideals and ethics.

"Upton Sinclair writes half truths about the American scene which, as far as they go, bear enough resemblance to the whole truth to confirm the average European's preconceived notion of America as a land where Greed is the only God." (1)

"Upton Sinclair persists in believing that life can and ought to be measured with a Socialist yardstick and that everything and everybody who fails to meet the test of his radical formula is either a robber, an ignoramus, or a mental prostitute." (2)

Sixteen Authors to One

David Karsner

Intimate Sketches of Leading American Story Tellers

Lewis Copeland Co. N.Y. 1928

(1) Ibid. p.265

(2) Ibid. pp.265-266

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Sixteen Authors to One
David Karsner
Intimate Sketches of Leading American Story Tellers
Lewis Copeland Co. N.Y. 1928

(1) Ibid. p. 235

(2) Ibid. pp. 235-236

Charles C. Baldwin

Mr. Baldwin approves Sinclair's searching revelation of all the weaknesses of the industrial system, but thinks that his presentation is overdrawn and exaggerated.

"Mr. Sinclair in dramatizing his materials has exaggerated folly into evil." (1)

"He lived among the workers and got at first hand the sordid bloodiness, the sorrowful filth, the torturing toil that ground down the hapless serfs of our modern overlords to pile up dividends for the fifth and sixth generation of them that deserve them not, " (2)

"Book after book followed, each laying open one of the fester spots of a moribund capitalistic society." (3)

The Men Who Make Our Novels

Charles C. Baldwin

Dodd, Mead and Co., N.Y., 1924.

- (1) Ibid.P.452
- (2) Ibid.P.456
- (3) Ibid.P.456

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The Men Who Make Our Novels

Charles G. Baldwin

Doubt, Head and Co., N.Y., 1924.

- (1) 1914.7.452
- (2) 1914.7.453
- (3) 1914.7.454

Lawrence S. Norris

Mr. Norris accuses Sinclair of emotionalism without rationalization. He emphasizes the prejudice with which all of Sinclair's work is colored.

"The world, he found indignantly, was ridden by greed. The reformer, being a part of society, must begin by shedding the prejudices bred in him by his own time and place. Upton Sinclair, surprisingly, did not consider any preparation necessary." (1)

"There is no sign in Sinclair's writings that he was ever curious as what twists in human nature itself might have caused this unjust distribution of wealth." Bertrand Russell. "The hopes of the world must rest on the habit of forming opinions on evidence rather than passion."

"Sinclair had denied the economics of the capitalist; he has never sounded his own premises, testing, discarding, and remolding. His single purpose- to be the realist of the industrial age." (2)

"Sinclair has hated injustice more than he has loved justice. Faced with bitter injustice, he responds with uncritical fury." (3)

"The thin quaver of personal feelings rises above the argument." (4)

Mr. Sinclair's writing is permeated with personal emotion. His sincerity is not to be doubted but his purposefulness has led him to distortion. The truth of the facts which he states is unassailable, but the information which he records is carefully selected, and reveals only too clearly his attitude in any given situation. His sympathies from the start lie with the working man and all the facts which he accumulates are sought with the intention of revealing the laborer as an innocent victim of a vicious system and the capitalist as a tyrant with neither a heart nor a soul. His characters are not real in that to him the working man is a human angel with never a weakness and the capitalist is an inhuman devil with never a virtue.

The New Republic

March 7, 1928

"The Way of the Reformer"--Lawrence S. Norris

(1) Ibid. B90 (2) Ibid. P.91 (3) Ibid. P.92 (4) Ibid. P.93

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The New Republic
March 7, 1933

"The Way of the Reformer"--Lawrence S. Norris
(1) Ibid. 290 (2) Ibid. 291 (3) Ibid. 292 (4) Ibid. 293

PART TWO

CHAPTER FOUR

An Appraisal of the Results of the Work of Upton Sinclair.

An appraisal of the results of Mr. Sinclair's efforts both as a writer and in his efforts to put his theories to work must be made in a sympathetic manner or not at all.

He is one man in over one hundred millions who mounts a horse, sets his lance and goes forth to break a spear in an effort of rescue. He gives over all the objectives that men strive for in the hope that by his sacrifice others may benefit, and the attempt is real. He achieves a measure of success as a knight errant, is rewarded with a slight guerdon of gold and at once dissipates his small treasure in efforts to make his ideas real.

From his viewpoint, he is the "Perfect Knight"; persistent, consistent, a doer of the word.

Sinclair insists that from his earliest days he desired to become a writer of English, as another man might aim at being a physician, a lawyer, or an architect. His ideas of the use of his skill lay dormant. In 1897, he was graduated from the College of the City of New York and spent the following four years at Columbia University. During this period he endured the adjustments forced on the mind of every inquiring, sensitive, appreciative youth by the character

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of his environment. He had the exhilarations and the depressions we have all survived.

In an article for the "Independent", published May 14, 1903, he writes: "You do not understand, for you do not have the memory of that midnight hour when I knelt with a fire of anguish in my soul and hot tears upon my cheeks, and registered my vow: So help me Almighty God, and His angels, if I come out of this torture house alive, I never will rest in this world again until I have served the man who comes after me...Until I have made it impossible for joy and tenderness and rapture and awe to be lashed and spit upon and trampled and mashed into annihilation as mine have been ! Until I have made this world a place in which a young artist can live !"

With such motives, Sinclair was more than a man planning a career; he was an evangelist. He was beset by ideas that would make him a martyr, a fanatic, a hero. There was no help for him. His path lay along one road, and come what may, that road would he travel. And travel it he has, to the very end.

The influence of such a spirit can rarely be tested by tangible results. His success lies in the hold he seizes on the minds of other men and the impulses he arouses in them to go forward to his goal. Spread over a continent and as well to other lands, he might inspire thousands and were they not welded into an organization, they might never be

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counted. And yet, in many slight and gentle ways, his followers affect the fabric of society.

Sinclair had certain concrete objectives; few have been accomplished. He adopted "Socialism" as a creed for the cure of the economic ailments he felt afflicted America. Socialism is a word with vague and varying implications. Terms such as Communism, Socialism, Democracy, Fascism, Naziism, have one point in common; they are poor definitions. They point in a direction, North, East, South, or West, but never to a fixed spot. So, when Sinclair decided that Socialism was the aegis under which he would enlist, he espoused a cause that has a thousand different meanings to millions of men; and one that must prevail over a great area before application of its principles can be made.

So, from the standpoint of bringing about a socialist state, either of mind or of government, he has got no result. Presumably, he has added to the converts to Socialism as any earnest preacher would.

His own little efforts to set up socialistic settlements have gone the ways of all other attempts. They seem to prove that such small communities cannot survive in America at this time.

Sinclair's attacks on economic and governmental evils show a definite product. He was one of a group of men and women whose explorations and writings stirred the reading public of the United States. These readers responded to

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the stimuli of the horrors depicted by engendering a public opinion that compelled our legislators to enact laws aimed at the correction of certain evils. The administration of these laws has definitely improved conditions in several fields of social and industrial activities, where precise action was possible. This public opinion may not longer be interested in these matters, but the public mind remains sensitive and more easily aroused to seek correction of other evils because of the efforts of the men and women who did the muckraking in the early years of the present century.

In 1906, Sinclair's The Jungle was published, and later in the same year, Congress enacted the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906. In the public mind, the wave of protest following the issuance of Sinclair's book forced the passage of this law. Surely, there are few instances of so immediate result from the writing of a novel of protest.

As is so often the case, it was the author's first major endeavor which gained for him public acclaim and resulted in definite action in the direction of reform. It was, perhaps, due to the fact that he hit his readers in a most vulnerable spot, their stomachs. Not since this time has the reformer brought about any tangible action. What results he may have got have been imperceptible; "appeal to reason" is never so effective as is a physical blow.

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The material in Mr. Sinclair's books is more important than the writing. Perhaps this statement takes him from the ranks of novelists and places him with the writers of technical works. But, while the message of the writer outweighs the interest in the book, his approach and technique are all those of the novelist.

Were we to put from our minds the objective of Sinclair and feel only for the artistry of his work, we would discern the ability he shows as a creator of characters and as a depicter of manners and events. Without this competence, his novels would never have reached the multitudes who have read them. Other men have told the story of the evils that flourished in the years from 1890 to the early part of the twentieth century, but what they wrote had no vogue. Upton Sinclair continues to be read and even the books he puts out from time to time have a circulation.

Upton Sinclair was an important figure in the world of literature. He combined a flair for inquiry with a white-hot enthusiasm against wrong and evil and a competence as a novelist. Any one of these abilities would have marked him for distinction. United, they made him a figure in our national life that will endure for many coming years. He is not a fixed star, but a comet whose first appearance was dazzling, and whose retreat into obscurity will be slow. Not many of the writers in America will be so rated.

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PART THREE

SUMMARY

During the three decades from 1879 to 1900, the influence of an idea changed the form of many fields of American business endeavor. The dominant motive in all business enterprises is to make the highest possible profit. Without this driving force there would be no business.

The invention of new machines and other instruments of the production of goods with improvement of methods of manufacture and distribution, made possible the output of great quantities of all products. The most effective way of their manufacture and sale was with single units of large size, completely equipped with the most efficient machines and methods. Large amounts of capital were necessary for each such unit.

Bold, energetic spirits organized corporations, secured credit and capital, sought, fought for, and obtained control of many smaller factories and businesses and established large, efficiently organized and capably operated enterprises, commonly known as "Trusts".

These organizations were created in an atmosphere of battle, and every stratagem of war was used to ensure success. Every crime in the code, every unethical way of

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These organizations were created in an atmosphere of battle, and every stratagem of war was used to secure success. Every crime in the code, every unethical way of

conduct, every unfair business practice has been charged in some measure to each of these giant undertakings. There is no need to enumerate them.

After success in securing business dominance had been assured, the same attitude persisted, and in relations with purveyors, customers, and work people, selfish and cruel methods were employed.

Toward the work people the managements of great businesses took the position that labor was abundant and cheap, that the owners had no responsibility for the welfare of the employees, that good business judgment dictated paying the smallest practicable wage and expending the least possible amount in providing reasonable working and living conditions.

In each industry the appearances of things were different, but the underlying situation was universal.

In the late nineties, information about the cruelties and horrors of our industrial life appeared in press and magazine. The American public began to take a mild interest in the stories told; and suggestions for correction of some of the evils appeared.

In 1872, Upton Sinclair was born in Baltimore, endured a drab and unstimulating childhood, attended school, college, and university, and evidenced a flair for rapid, fluent

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In 1872, Upton Sinclair was born in Baltimore, entered a dry and unstimulating childhood, attended school, college, and university, and witnessed a Blair for rapid, fluent

writing on which he started to earn a living and achieve a career. His nature was sensitive and introspective, his mind clever and skilful, his will determined and purposeful. About 1900, he was animated with an idea that he might be a great poet, profoundly disturbed by the indifference of the world of people to his existence, mingled with amazement that no means of nurturing a poet while he dreamed and wrote, had been provided by society.

He turned to the writing of novels as an outlet for his emotions and a way of making an income. By chance, he went to the stockyards and packing houses of Chicago in search of material for a book. There he found all the evils and horrors of industrial life as it then existed. The reaction on his nature, mind and will was immediate and profound. Emotions of pity and sympathy for the workers, and of resentment and anger towards the owners and a keen desire to punish the wrongdoers took possession of his spirit. He wrote The Jungle.

Success in many forms came to Sinclair. Public acclaim, moderate royalties, with publication of his book in many countries were his reward. He announced himself as a socialist; preached its dogmas as a way of helping the working people of America; started an enterprise of the co-operative type, and lost most of what he had earned. He then turned

to the study of another industrial field, lived in the locale, observed the people and conditions, and then wrote another book. One a year, two a year, one in two years, they came forth, each on a different aspect of our American life, all in a similar pattern and inspired by the same emotions and attitudes.

Big Business dominated Upton Sinclair. It shaped his life and determined his career. In response to its demands, he gave up hopes of a poetic career to become a novelist.

Big Business aroused in Sinclair so great an antipathy, so profound an abhorrence, that he gave his life to the exposure of its evils, the denunciation of its iniquities, and to efforts for its abolition. Business and Industry are monsters of hideous mien to Upton Sinclair and will continue so to be all his days. His studies and observations are to him added proof of the soundness of his position and the truth of his attitude. They are ammunition for further attacks.

Sinclair's contacts with Big Business developed him into a constant objector, a continual protestant, a hater of things as they are, a denouncer of every man, and agency engaged in the conduct and management of the corporations that maintain the economic life stream of the country.

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to the study of another industrial field, lived in the locale, observed the people and conditions, and then wrote another book. One a year, two a year, one in two years, they came forth, each on a different aspect of our American life, all in a similar pattern and inspired by the same emotions and attitudes.

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of his point of view. He has protected himself by basing his statements on fact, but his facts have been so carefully selected that they support emphatically his preconceived ideas. His opinions are static; they have never changed from the formative period of his early youth. Year after year he finds new ways of presenting the same ideas.

He is a man touched in a degree with genius; intense, dogmatic, and fanatical. Sideline observers do not like fanatics; they are upsetting people and disturbing to one's peace and quiet. Sinclair has been trying to upset our serenity of mind for many years. He has reached a large public in two ways; as a novelist and as a preacher of protest. He has held this public longer than most writers are able to keep an audience. The form of many of the evils he attacked has changed; but the evils themselves, in new shapes, continue to reappear.

Farmer and Winchman, New York, 1932.

Doctor

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